

AUTOWEEK®

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

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IN SPIRIT & DEED

THE **2017 BMW M2** CHANNELS ITS 2002 TURBO BROTHER—AND WE CAN'T WAIT TO GET IT ON THE TRACK!



THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE...
DETROIT AUTO SHOW WINNERS:
FORD RAPTOR, KIA TELLURIDE,
CHRYSLER PACIFICA
& BUICK AVISTA



DOES DRIVING MATTER?

DOES A WINDING ROAD INTO THE CLOUDS
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MATTER IF THE CAR YOU'RE IN DOESN'T TAKE
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2016 MAZDA MX-5 MIATA | DRIVING MATTERS™

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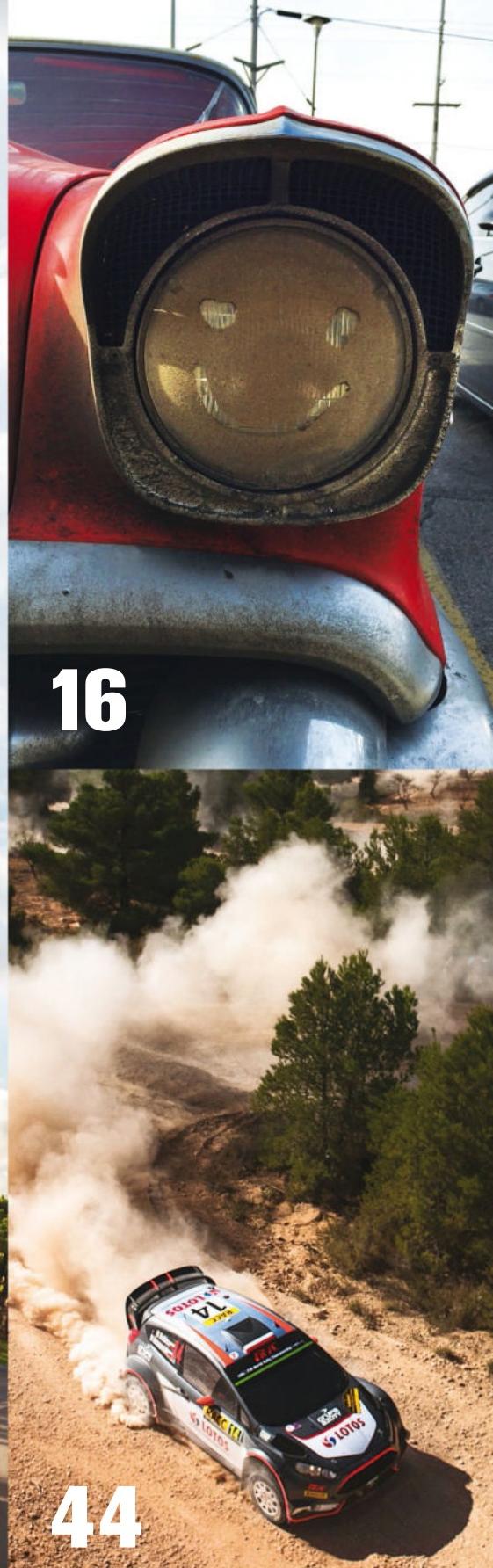
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COVER PHOTO BY RENATO ZACCHIA



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START



RENATO ZACHIA

NAIAS

DETROIT DIAMONDS

THE MOTOR CITY SHINES WITH STUNNING DEBUTS

AFTER DOZENS OF PRESS CONFERENCES and gallons of coffee, another North American International Auto Show is in the books. This year featured the usual acres of new sheetmetal and concepts from almost every automaker. We saw a Buick stunner (love the paint!), new pickups from Honda and Nissan, a gorgeous Kia crossover, the new Porsche 911 Turbo and a lot more. Here are the highlights.

BEST IN SHOW ▶ BUICK AVISTA

■ Rumors were flying prior to the show that Buick was going to reveal a sports-car concept, and we hoped to see the mighty Grand National reborn. Turns out the Avista is more a modern-day Riviera—not a bad thing—and a worthy successor to the Avenir concept Buick showed last year. There's some carryover; you can see it in the fastback lines, but it's especially prevalent in the clean, flowing interior.

Buick boss Duncan Aldred says the Avista "stretches the

boundaries of what is possible for Buick."

It certainly does. The car's rear-drive platform; 3.0-liter, 400-hp turbo V6; and eight-speed automatic is, we suspect, the package coming on the Cadillac CT6.

Will the General Motors division build it? Aldred said it's feasible, adding there is a need and desire for rear-wheel drive at Buick, "so I wouldn't rule anything out."

OTHERS CONSIDERED: None



MOST SIGNIFICANT ▼ CHRYSLER PACIFICA

■ More than 30 years ago, Chrysler gave the world the minivan, and it wasn't long before the boxy, useful thing worked its way into millions of hearts. Then SUVs and crossovers happened, and the hum-

ble minivan became uncool. Chrysler is hoping to reignite the flame with the 2017 Chrysler Pacifica and Pacifica Hybrid, the company's shot at revitalizing the segment with fresh styling, loads of tech and fuel

economy that's up to 80 mpg equivalent, according to Chrysler. The new vans have two powertrains available: the 3.6-liter Pentastar V6, good for 287 hp and 262 lb-ft, and a plug-in hybrid system combining a modified Atkinson-cycle version of the 3.6-liter (248 hp, 230 lb-ft)

with a 16-kWh lithium-ion battery and an FCA-patented "electrically variable transmission with dual-motor EV drive capability." On sale this spring.

OTHERS CONSIDERED:
Honda Ridgeline
Genesis G90



BEST CONCEPT ▼ KIA TELLURIDE

■ The handsome Telluride concept is a three-row, seven-passenger peek at what a future premium Kia offering could look like, especially if suicide doors come back into vogue. We wouldn't be shocked if something like the Telluride ended up in Hyundai's new upscale Genesis division. The concept rides on a stretched Sorento platform, and here's something unique: Kia says the seatbacks are fitted with sen-

sors measuring and displaying passengers' vital signs on the interior door panels. They synchronize with a Light Emitted Rejuvenation system, using an LED panel located below the sunroof to display a pattern of therapeutic light to treat jetlag, thus improving passenger energy levels. Or something.

OTHERS CONSIDERED:
Acura Precision
Audi H Tron

MOST FUN ▼ FORD RAPTOR

■ The new Raptor pickup ditches the last model's V8 in favor of a Ford GT-sourced 3.5-liter twin-turbo V6 (yeah, baby!). Output hasn't been revealed, but Ford says look for more than the outgoing truck's 411 hp and 434 lb-ft. It's paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission and Ford's Terrain Management

System with modes for street, mud/sand, rocks and weather. The 2017 Ford Raptor goes on sale this fall. Pricing hasn't been announced but should be close to the last Raptor's \$45,000 tag.

OTHERS CONSIDERED:
BMW M2
Lexus LC 500





BMW M2

BMW

■ BMW calls the M2 "highly anticipated," and for once we have to agree with an automaker's press release.

The coupe gets a 3.0-liter I6 with a twin-scroll turbocharger that helps deliver 365 hp at 6,500 rpm and 343 lb-ft at just 1,400 rpm, while the car's over-boost function adds 26 more lb-ft for short bursts. A dual-clutch transmission is optional; a rev-matching six-speed manual is standard.

Power goes to the rear wheels through a variable Active M differential; the whole shootin' match is good for a 0-60 time of 4.2 seconds, 4.4 with the manual gearbox. Top speed is electronically limited to 155 mph.

To keep it all planted, BMW took 11 pounds from the front suspension and shaved a few more grams with new aluminum parts. In back, the M2 uses an aluminum five-link setup that's



Honda Ridgeline

six pounds lighter than steel. Michelin Pilot Super Sport tires sit at the corners: 245/35ZR-19 in front, 265/35ZR-19 in back. Four-piston calipers slow 15-inch rotors in the front; two pistons clamp down on 14.5-inch plates in the back.

M cars are most at home at a Jersey Shore nightclub on a

track, hence the modified sump limiting oil movement to keep everything lubed up—especially under hard acceleration (the M2 gets a launch-control function). Additionally, an extra oil pump sends the oil back to the rear of the sump under heavy braking.

The M2 starts at \$51,700 and goes on sale in April.

HONDA

■ The new Ridgeline pickup gets more conventional styling, Honda's 3.5-liter V6 engine and six-speed automatic transmission. It comes in front- and all-wheel-drive configurations; the latter is the Pilot's i-VTM4 torque-vectoring system, including drive modes for mud, sand

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START // NAIAS

and more. The new truck keeps its predecessor's dual-action tailgate—it folds down and swings to the side. Honda expects a payload approaching 1,600 pounds, in line with its midsize competition, and it should tow 3,500 pounds or 5,000 pounds, depending on whether it's front- or all-wheel drive. It's on sale this summer.

INFINITI

■ The curtains were pulled on the slick Q60 coupe, the second model to get the company's 400-hp twin-turbo 3.0-liter V6, after the Q50 Red Sport sedan. Available in rear- or all-wheel drive, the Q60 uses a seven-speed automatic to transfer power. An adjustable suspension is optional, as is a premium Bose sound system.

LEXUS

■ The rear-drive LC 500 has carbon fiber in the roof, aluminum door skins with a carbon-fiber inner structure and a composite trunk floor—all combining to help get curb weight down. The 5.0-liter V8 from the RC-F and GS-F powers the LC, pro-



Lincoln Continental

ducing 467 hp and 389 lb-ft. Lexus says the 10-speed automatic shifts as quickly as a dual-clutch, but we'll see. Lexus also says the car should jog to 60 mph in less than 4.5 seconds.

While this is decidedly a sports coupe, it's also a premium mode of travel. Available Alcantara covers the seats and an available Mark Levinson audio package should take care of your music needs nicely. A safety package is also available,

with lane-keep assist, automatic high beams and dynamic cruise control.

No word on price or availability, but we imagine it's coming later this year, and we imagine it will be expensive.

LINCOLN

■ Good to see much of the Continental concept's character make it to the 2017 production car. There's a little less chrome now, but the face, the silhouette

and even the wild blue interior are intact, along with a boatload of luxury features and safety tech. Power comes from a Lincoln-exclusive 3.0-liter V6 estimated to produce an even 400 hp and 400 lb-ft. The Continental rides on a front-drive layout, and all-wheel drive is available. Will the FWD configuration turn off prospective buyers? Well, we're not sure. The new Lincoln goes on sale this fall.



Infiniti Q60



Nissan Titan Warrior Concept

MERCEDES-BENZ

■ Benz's 10th-generation E-Class is bigger all around and features a 241-hp turbo-four and autonomous driving features so good, they could make Google nervous. Look for it to appear in dealerships this summer.

Let's get right to the weird stuff. Pre-Safe Sound is standard on the new E. The system is "based on a protective human reflex in the inner ear called the stapedius reflex." Because ear damage is apparently a common problem in car accidents, the system emits an interference signal through the speakers when a possible collision is detected, sending the eardrum into a defensive state, protecting it from harm.

The optional Driver Assistance Package includes Drive Pilot (Distronic cruise control follows traffic and maintains distance at speeds up to 130 mph), Steering Pilot (eases into corners, taking surrounding vehicles and structures into account), Active Brake Assist, Evasive Steering Assist and more.

Pricing is coming closer to launch. Today's E-Class starts at about \$53,000, but we expect all the new gizmos to bump this up a bit.

NISSAN

■ Nissan is taking its pickup to new heights with its Titan Warrior Concept. With four-wheeling in mind, Nissan lifted the truck nearly 3 inches—making space for the massive 37-inch knobby off-road tires, without having to cut anything on the truck. Custom 18-inch rims sit inside. The Titan Warrior Concept gets some visual attitude from the futuristic, robot-esque exterior armor. The impact is furthered thanks to a special grille, headlight assemblies and a skidplate tying into the front bumper.

PORSCHE

■ The 2017 911 Turbo and Turbo S powertrain upgrades are good for 540 hp and 580 hp, respectively. Lordy! Modified intake ports, new fuel injectors and higher fuel pressure all contribute to the horsepower boost. Like the M2, the 911 Turbo has an overboost function that gives the driver 20 seconds of max acceleration. Top speed is 205 mph, and the sprint to 60 mph takes just 2.9 seconds. This is the 911, so the shape doesn't change much, though front and rear ends were redesigned and the rear decklid now features longitudinal vent vanes and an intake in between.



Lexus LC 500



Mercedes-Benz E-Class



Porsche 911 Turbo

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■ AS WE'VE DONE THE PAST

several years, we once again hosted a gaggle of Autoweek Advisors at the North American International Auto Show during industry preview days. What a great time! Autoweek editors gave a personal guided tour to car peeps from around the U.S.—before the show opened to the public. We walked them through our favorites, talked tech and shared the latest rumors and gossip about concepts and production cars. Then we all went out for drinks and dinner and swapped stories and shared our thoughts. Want in for next year? Become an Autoweek Advisor; sign up for free at autoweek.com/advisors



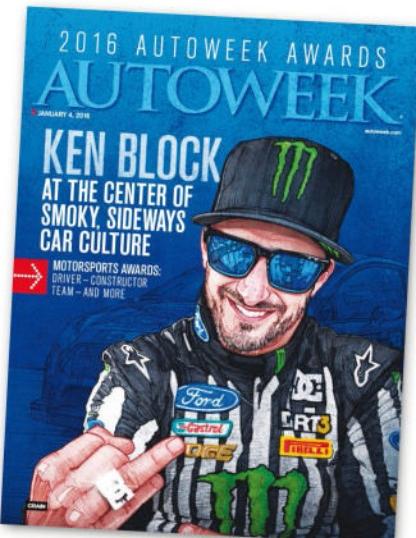
EDITOR'S PICK: THANKS, INDIANA

■ Cloakroom, a three-piece band from Northwestern Indiana, released their debut full-length album, "Further Out," a year ago. Some Autoweek editors recently caught them at the Majestic Café in Detroit. We recommend all three of their releases for long drives and overnight wrench sessions. Check them out: runforcoverrecords.com

REVVED UP

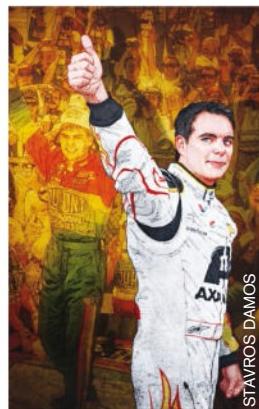
2016 Autoweek Awards, Car Culture Award, Peter Hughes, Jan. 4

Hello! Your Jan. 4 article about Ken Block was a very interesting read. We are part of that 300,000,000 number watching the gymkhana videos because someone at autoweek.com imbedded a link and said, "Hey, watch this video!" We were able to attend the Global Rallycross event in Los Angeles this past September, and what impressed us the most was the accessibility of the drivers. After the race, we walked along autograph row and got to speak with every driver. And many of them, including Ken Block and Travis Pastrana, asked us if we were coming back the next day and thanked us for being there. The actual racing may not be as exciting as Formula One, but the way the fans are invited into the pits is remarkable. So yes, big names—



Pastrana, Piquet Jr., Speed, Block—but they are very humble and super nice guys. (P.S. Married into the Autoweek subscription and have been hooked ever since ... 13 years.)

Heidi A. Fritz, via email



2016 Autoweek Awards, Autoweek Achievement—The Denise McCluggage Award, Al Pearce, Jan. 4

Many thanks for creating this award. Denise was a true craftsman in all she did. Jeff Gordon appears to be a person that she would proudly hold in the highest esteem. I kept looking for her among the crowd illustrated on page 31. She is missed.

Bob Wollenman, via email



FROM AUTOWEEK'S TWITTER FEED

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Could the new 2016 Toyota Prius actually be fun? bit.ly/1RGQUoZ

@eganschulz: no
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PISTON SLAP ▶ By Mark Vaughn



I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE

IN THE PAST, THE CONSUMER Electronics Show was just color TVs, microwave ovens and that thing that turned the lights off when you clapped. If there was anything automotive at all, it was some car stereos and maybe a few obnoxious car alarms. We remember one guy hawking CB radios—that's how long we've been going to CES.

Well, all that's changed. The automotive sector now makes up 10 percent of CES' square footage. There were 12 carmakers this year, if you count a couple with displays outside the CES showrooms. The place is starting to look like a Detroit or Tokyo show. There were carmakers that have been around for a hundred years and ones hoping to be around next week. It ran the gamut.

Chevrolet held the world debut of its practical little Bolt EV, a battery electric subcompact promising more than a 200-mile range. The Bolt sits on the first new EV platform GM has made since the EV1, which debuted 25 years ago in Los Angeles. GM even set up a test track in a parking lot across from CES, and we took a Bolt for a couple silent, electric laps. It felt quicker and faster than similarly sized competitors. It was quick—the course was like an autocross track—and we were hammering the thing so hard, a near-apoplectic GM guy leapt from his hospitality tent and made violent motions for us to slow the hell down. Imagine that happening in an EV1.

Volkswagen made its 152nd apology for the whole diesel thing, then rolled out a potential Bolt competitor called BUDD-e. It's close in size and shape to GM's mass-market EV and also sits on its own new EV platform called MEB, but the BUDD-e is only a concept. Everyone on the planet was hoping against all hope it would be in looks and proportions the

modern successor to the beloved microbus. However, the BUDD-e looked almost exactly like the unloved Scion xA (Google it; you'll agree). Many cars are coming on the MEB, so we can still hope.

While GM and VW went practical and buildable, a new company called Faraday Future went way to the other extreme with a supercar so improbable all you could do was ooh and aah at its Spaceman Spiff shape. The (theoretically) 200-mph electric FFZERO1 is half Le Mans prototype and half food processor, with so many knife-like edges we worried about paper cuts. Faraday also showed video of its new architecture, a deliriously optimistic stretchable platform the company claimed could accommodate everything from a premium luxury car to a pickup truck. Rather than scoop up a free, existing factory some old-school carmaker abandoned, Faraday cut a billion-



Mary Barra introduces the 2017 Bolt EV at CES 2016.

dollar check for a new facility in North Las Vegas, just up Interstate 15 from where it introduced its concept car. Good luck, lads!

Other car companies went into detail about their autonomous ambitions—rest assured self-driving cars will be in our future sooner rather than later—and connecting cars to homes was a big trend. It's now possible to turn on the heater or the A/C before you arrive home and also open the garage door with your cellphone. What will the car of the future be like? Maybe less involving to drive, but more entertaining to be in. We'll see you there.

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7 FUNCTION

DIGITAL

MULTIMETER

ITEM

LOT 63387/62270/62744/68784 shown

12929-750

ANY ITEM

SINGLE ITEM

ITEM

LOT 90899 shown

98025/69096

With ANY PURCHASE

CENTER

\$15 VALUE

ITEM

LOT 63387/62270/62744/68784 shown

12929-750

ITEM

HOMECOMING

2,900 MILES IN THE DEAD OF WINTER IS JUST THE BEGINNING

BY GRAHAM KOZAK



THE EASY THING—
the obvious thing—to do
would have been to wait
until the warm months
to stage the Drive Home.

The last things you want to deal with
when you're covering 2,900 miles between
Tacoma, Washington, and Detroit in three
vintage cars are snow, sub-zero temperatures
and road salt. Especially road salt.

When the LeMay-America's Car
Museum announced its plans to do just
that in the lead-up to the 2016 North
American International Auto Show, a
chunk of the old-car community lit up
with outrage. How could anyone who
cares about old cars subject them to an
icy, salty torture-test—especially a muse-
um? Cynics framed the transcontinental
odyssey, set to be capped off with a cruise
down Woodward Avenue and onto the
show floor, as a crass publicity stunt.

Publicity was part of it (and there's
nothing wrong with that). The LeMay-



owned cars selected for the run—a 1957
Chevrolet Nomad, a 1961 Chrysler 300G
and a 1966 Ford Mustang—were plastered
with sponsor decals. But it was clear that a
bigger vision fueled the whole thing.

At a gathering in Chicago, where we
hopped aboard for the Drive Home's penul-
timate leg, LeMay president and CEO
David Madeira spelled it out. In museums,
he explained, "cars are dead. They sit
there, and I find them sad. A car that is

made to run sits motionless and rots. ...
Let's get them out and drive them!"

We can get behind that. So too, appar-
ently, could the critics. They came around
to Madeira's thinking soon enough or else
kept their mouths shut.

The next morning was bitterly cold but
bore no threat of snow. There wasn't much
of it to contend with along the way—the
crew had prepared for the worst, but El
Niño did its part to keep the roads unsea-



Opposite: The Mustang, Nomad and Chrysler showed an early appetite for long, open western highways.

Counterclockwise from top: Meeting up with the Mother Road in Pontiac, Illinois; Detroit steel enhances an already-stunning vista; St. Louis, here serving as the gateway to the East; your author behind the wheel of the '61 Chrysler; cruising down Woodward to Detroit—and the auto show.



DERRICK KLEIN (4); NAIAS



sonably passable. The worst of the weather had tapered off west of the Rockies.

We left Chicagoland, and a chilly-but-pleasant cars-and-coffee event, in the Nomad. At some point, maybe in the early 1960s, it lost its 283 motor and its column shifter; a 327 and a four-speed floor shifter made it the most modified car in the group. Once we'd mastered the sticky gearbox, the finned wagon proved a wonderful road warrior. It just wanted to go, slight thirst for oil aside, and so did we.

After lunch, we turned down the Mustang in favor of the big Chrysler. Steering was extra sloppy on center—nothing a steering box rebuild couldn't fix—but with a massive 413 V8 pumping out modern-feeling power, the midcentury-modern boat was happy to spend all day at 85 mph.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. Is there any pairing more natural than an optimistic postwar-boom car and an optimistic postwar-boom interstate system? The whole thing felt rebellious, though,

like we were getting away with something by covering beautiful old Detroit steel in salt spray. (Fear not: LeMay staff and volunteers will decontaminate the cars.) Not that smartphone-addicted drivers noticed.

We floated into the Detroit suburb of Birmingham well after dark, headlights blazing behind a theatrical coat of grime.

Two days later, the cars set out down Woodward Avenue along with a trickle of other classics, a small but eclectic escort including everything from a BMW M1 to a Citroën Dyane. The drivers' sentiments mirrored Madeira's: Cars, even cool old ones, are meant to be driven, even if they get dirty. There is nothing worse than simply letting them rot in a garage.

The Drive Home trio had traded their snow tires for reproduction whitewalls when they emerged on the Detroit auto show floor, but they hadn't taken a bath. Fine by us; the cars' imperfections force you to consider them something more than collectors' playthings. It makes them

real once again. You feel you could grab the keys, hop in and drive clear across the country. Then you realize this is exactly what the LeMay just did, and you get these funny ideas: Couldn't I drive a car like this all the time? Or at least some of the time?

If the stars align, the Drive Home to the Detroit auto show could be the start of something bigger. Maybe a growing annual tradition. Maybe a shift in perception and perspective, a new way of looking at all the old cars relegated to trailer-queen duty.

Maybe even a new movement.

Or maybe nothing so dramatic. But if the Drive Home coaxes a few more cars from garages and off concours greens and onto the roads—where they can do what they were built to do and where they stand a better chance of sparking a wider love for things old and wheeled—then we know one thing for sure: All the effort, all the miles and all the road salt were worth it. We're happy to have been along for part of the ride. ☀



BIKES // 2016 YAMAHA YZ250F

JUMP FOR JOY!

YAMAHA'S BRILLIANT MOTOCROSS MACHINE NAILS THE FUNDAMENTALS

BY JOHN L. STEIN

FEELING THE NEED to channel your inner King of Cool? Well, then prepare to pony up \$50,000 to \$100,000 for a "Bullitt"-spec 1968 Mustang GT fastback. And good luck owning anything Steve McQueen actually rode in or drove for fewer than six figures.

As an alternative, for under \$8,000, let Yamaha's YZ250F give you the two-wheeled "On Any Sunday" or Baja 1000 experience—only better, as motocross technology has progressed fantastically since the McQueen era.

The latest version of Yamaha's 250cc DOHC single produces a stated 39 hp for a specific output of 156 hp per liter (well in excess of Porsche's 911 GT3). A "reversed" cylinder head and exhaust centralize mass, and EFI boosts performance across the 14,000-rpm rev range. Full of 91-octane pump gas, the YZ250F tips in at 231 pounds for a 5.9:1

**FEATURES**

Holding just two gallons of fuel and a quart of oil, the YZ250F is a miracle of compact engineering. Kickstarting, magneto ignition and battery-less fuel injection keep mass down and performance up.

BASE PRICE: \$7,590**ON SALE:** Now**OTHERS TO CONSIDER:**

- Honda CRF250R
- Kawasaki KX250F
- KTM 250 SX-F
- Suzuki RM-Z250

weight-to-power ratio (supercharged Shelby GT Mustang territory, if we're trying to draw a fun-per-pound comparison).

We tested the YZ250F at Milestone MX Park in Riverside, California, and

found it a highly focused and refined competition machine. Less than a quarter-turn of throttle sends power raging through the five-speed sequential gearbox (with or without the clutch, your choice), with the front wheel either on the track or lofting skyward (likewise, your choice).

Compared to previous YZs, the latest model has a meatier torque spread, providing power in any gear in a wide range of conditions. Chassis geometry and balance is likewise better, letting the YZ250F track inside lines or rail outside berms equally well. An aluminum frame and over a foot of fully adjustable suspension travel help it master jumps and terrain far beyond most riders' abilities.

Comfort? Not so much. Two days on the firm seat and enduring a heavy workload left us pleasantly sore. But isn't that the point? Riding motocross is like working every machine in the gym simultaneously and at maximum pace—a prospect as intimidating to a novice as it is invigorating to a pro. Happily, the YZ250F is one of those rare machines that suits both types of rider. ☀

GEAR //**BELL MOTO-9 CARBON FLEX**

■ Off-road crashes can happen at a near standstill—or at freeway speeds. DOT and Snell 2010 rated, Bell's Moto-9 Carbon Flex helmet (\$600-\$700) uses a three-layer segmented liner to absorb low-, medium- and high-speed forces like a progressive spring. Importantly, it also absorbs rotational forces during glancing blows. The carbon composite shell reduces weight to 3.2 pounds, and an emergency release allows gentle removal. We found the segmented liner comfortable, with good airflow and noise cancellation.

amzn.to/1RH2lInf

**ALPINESTARS TECH 10 BOOT**

■ More than any other sport, motocross exposes your feet and ankles to constant risk. Alpinestars' Tech 10 boot (\$600) focuses on consummate foot, ankle and lower-leg protection—including limiting injurious overextensions—while also providing maximum shifter and brake-lever feel. The upper closes with three adjustable aluminum buckles, and an articulated soft liner "floats" inside the outer shell, markedly improving comfort. Our test Tech 10s weighed 4.5 pounds each, but we scarcely noticed once in motion. amzn.to/1nlavOh



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CARLIFE



1950 Ferrari 166 MM/195 S



1959 GMC NAPCO Truck

ARIZONA AUCTIONS PREVIEW

KEEP THAT BULL MARKET RUNNING

IN SCOTTSDALE, TRUCKS ARE HOT—AND SUPERCARS ARE SET TO PARTY LIKE IT'S 1989

BY JAY RAMEY

□ THE ARIZONA AUCTIONS HAVE a record-setting 2015 to live up to. Last year, the annual extravaganza brought \$292.8 million in sales from across six auction houses, eclipsing the 2014 totals of \$248.6 million.

The “blue chip” frequent fliers of the collector car world continued to hold their own, value-wise, for the rest of 2015, while other segments, such as 1980s sports cars, kept accelerating.

Expect auction houses to try mightily to build momentum with these season-opening sales in the face of a market that some suspect

is cooling. In Arizona, we’ll see a lot of rare European machinery (perhaps not all of it headed for seven-figure territory) sharing the stage with staples like muscle cars and American classics, with collectors trying to find models with potential for growth.

While much-hyped Japanese classics stumbled a little last year, there will still be plenty of Toyota FJ40s in 2016 as restorers continue to aim for six-figure results. And though you won’t be able to pick up a bargain Ferrari Testarossa this year (those days are over; see sidebar), the forward-looking collector will note that classic pickup trucks are just getting started—and there are plenty of underpublicized specimens out there.

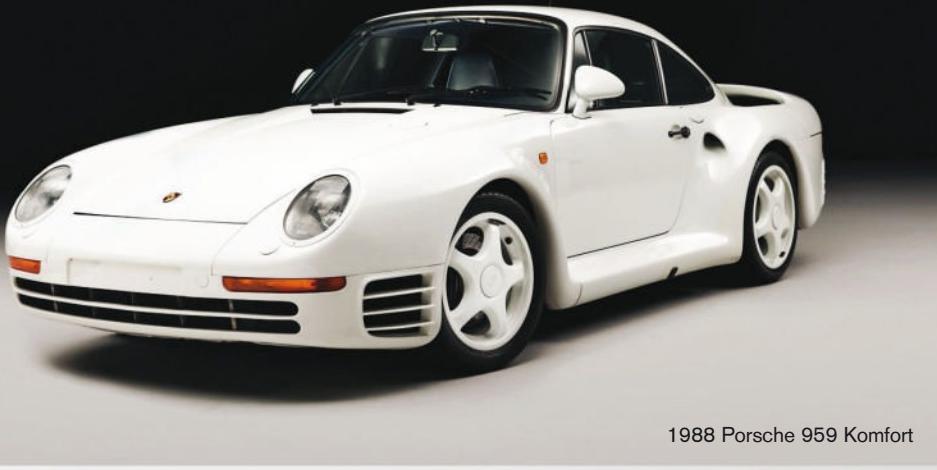
This year, the auctions run from Jan. 23-31. Here are a few lots to keep your eye on, as well as sale price estimates, as the biggest gambling event of the year commences.

1959 GMC NAPCO TRUCK

Russo and Steele
\$60,000-\$90,000

■ There was a time when your typical truck didn’t come from the factory with four-wheel drive, but that didn’t stop the aftermarket from figuring out how to power all the wheels. Trucks featuring in-period 4x4 conversions, once obscure, are breaking out into the mainstream, and restorers are combing the countryside for overlooked survivors. This rugged GMC NAPCO with a Fleetside bed and V8 underhood, offered by Russo and Steele and subject of a high-caliber body-off restoration, wouldn’t be a bad place to start your collection. It’s a plum example and ought to command a mighty price, but we’re not sure just how high it will go.





1988 Porsche 959 Komfort

**1950 FERRARI 166
MM/195 S BERLINETTA
LE MANS**
Gooding & Co.
\$5,750,000-\$6,500,000

■ Ferraris remain a safe bet, and many are still making moves in the market (if not on the road or track). This early 166 MM/195 S Berlinetta Le Mans, delivered new to Briggs Cunningham and one of six built, may not have the sleek lines of its successors, but with its impeccable provenance and race history, it will test the depth of knowledge—and wallets—of connoisseurs.

**1983 TOYOTA FJ40
LAND CRUISER**

Gooding & Co.
\$100,000-\$125,000
■ One reliable bid-generator for the past few years has been the FJ40. Gooding &

Co. will offer a 1983 example from the last year of importation, complete with creature comforts like AC and power steering.

**1988 PORSCHE 959
KOMFORT**

RM Sotheby's
\$1,100,000-\$1,400,000

■ 1980s supercars are waking up—their youngest fans now have the money to buy more than just their posters—and the Porsche 959 is the king of them all. This grand prix white example with 25,500 km on the clock will poke at the price ceiling for Zuffenhausen's techno masterpiece.

**1977 PORSCHE 930
3.0 TURBO**

Bonhams
\$225,000-\$275,000
■ The days of 930 Turbos

being offered in the used-car classifieds are pretty much over. The question now is, how high can they go? Bonhams will offer a copper-brown example that has a claimed 32,000 miles on the clock; "The Widowmaker" strikes again, this time threatening to clean out bidders' retirement accounts.

1995 FERRARI F512M

RM Sotheby's
\$400,000-\$475,000

■ Get ready to see every version and variant of the Testarossa at auction, now that their values have taken a sharp turn north. Here's one from toward the end of the model's run: RM Sotheby's will offer a late 512M this January with a claimed 23,900 miles on the clock, one of just 75 delivered to the U.S.



**1959 CHEVROLET CORVETTE
"PURPLE PEOPLE EATER" MK III**

Barrett-Jackson
\$750,000-\$1,000,000

■ This famous fuel-injected "Purple People Eater" Corvette claimed an SCCA National Championship class win in 1959, but it disappeared a short time later and remained lost for years before popping up at a swap meet in the 1970s. This is easily one of the most recognizable racing 'Vettes, in part because of the sheer number of scale models and tribute cars that have been built.



■ MARKET
**1991 FERRARI
TESTAROSSA COUPE**
RM Sotheby's
Driven by Disruption sale
New York City
Dec. 10, 2015

■ Nero (black) over matching Nero leather. 428-hp, 4,942cc DOHC flat-12 with Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection; five-speed manual transmission. Fewer than 300 kilometers. Original owner from new. Said to have been in responsible storage since purchased, this example shows the paint and interior still in excellent, like-new condition. Your basic "delivery miles only" car that has good colors and solid history.

SOLD AT \$319,000

Time to shoot the experts (again). How many times did those who tell us what to think dis on the Testarossa? Thousands of times. It will never be collectible, they said. They built too many, its 1980s wedge styling is ugly, it's stuck (embarrassingly) in the "Miami Vice" era, and on and on.

Well, guess what? Fans of the Testarossa are getting the last laugh and laughing all the way to the bank. True, this was an exceptional example, and you can still find lots of them with miles for \$200,000 or so less. But facts are facts: The Testarossa is a bona fide, 12-cylinder Ferrari. They sold well when new, and what some saw as poorly aging styling in the 1990s and early 2000s is now considered evocative of the era.

The lessons here are many: First, buy what you like and enjoy it, even while others don't quite get it. Second, experts tend to look at things from the point of view of their generations and not from that of the up-and-comers—aka, the newer buyers. Third, he who laughs last, laughs best. —DAVE KINNEY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOODING & COMPANY/BRIAN HENNIKER, MATHIEU HEURTAULT & MARCEL MASSINI

THE TALE OF THE ALL-NEW

2016 MALIBU

AS TOLD FROM AN ENGINEERING AND DESIGN PERSPECTIVE.

We sat down with designers Mike Pevovar and Crystal Windham, and integration manager Lance Johnstone to talk about the innovation that went into developing the next-generation Malibu.



Malibu Premier with 2.0L engine offers a GM estimated 32 MPG highway. Official EPA estimates not yet available.





MIKE PEVOVAR & CRYSTAL WINDHAM

EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR DESIGN DIRECTORS

In terms of design, what are some defining features of the all-new Malibu?

Mike: The Chevrolet Malibu has a road presence that balances form and function in a way that will turn heads. When creating the “new face of Chevy,” the grille, headlamps and daytime running lamps all laid the foundation for the expressive, windswept body lines. The design is assertive and confident, as emphasized by its solidly planted stance. Long, dramatically sweeping surfaces really make Malibu stand out from the crowd. The whole vehicle feels tidy and taut — something you could throw around a little.

Crystal: Malibu interior design is all about maximizing comfort with style. The instrument panel is down and away for more driver space, but the available touch-screen is up to 8 inches. We offset and slightly floated the screen to use space better. That's pretty daring for this market, but glare and reach are optimized for a driver. Also, the softest materials are closest to the customers, and the details are outstanding — lots of inserts and accents of different textured leather appointments,

intricate stitching — it's taking those expressive zones and adding more. We want to surprise people, not just the first time, but the second time, third time — like, “Wow ... they have this little pocket here for my umbrella!” and “Wow ... so this is what my car looks like at night!”

How do interior and exterior design elements of the all-new Malibu complement each other?

Mike: The extra 1.3 inches of rear leg room set the stage for exterior design — it stretched everything, so we used that to set up body proportions to make the vehicle look lower, longer and wider. Also, the sixth rear quarter panel window not only increases visibility and brings more sunlight inside, it helps make the car look lighter, more airy and more spacious from the outside.

Crystal: When you start with a solid exterior foundation with correct proportions, the interior design architecture comes together naturally, and we can focus on improving visibility and comfort. I always say the exterior draws you in, but the interior keeps you there. Drivers spend so much time in their car, so it should feel like a second home.

“We want to surprise people, not just the first time, but the second time, third time...”

Crystal Windham, INTERIOR DESIGN DIRECTOR



LANCE JOHNSTONE

VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE INTEGRATION MANAGER

The 2016 Malibu is quieter, offers improved mileage and better handling. How could you improve Malibu on so many dimensions simultaneously?

The key is integration — working with all of the vehicle components and vehicle teams simultaneously to create the lightest, best performing structure for the vehicle. The ultimate goal was to design Malibu with surprising MPG with less mass, but no reduction in performance. Integration allowed us to work through all of the consequences of using one part or another, and combining components. It allowed us to optimize more and compromise less, and it really paid off in the all-new Malibu. We were able to remove nearly 300 pounds from the vehicle — making it the lightest vehicle in its class, all the while offering an estimated 37 MPG highway! ¹

What technologies aided in optimizing vehicle integration with the Malibu design team?

Computer-assisted engineering has progressed to the point where it allowed us to explore and virtually evaluate more design alternatives for the new Malibu than ever before. This gave us new insights by showing us how these alternative designs for the vehicle structure could improve performance across numerous different vehicle-performance dimensions. These internal structural improvements then paved the way for new external design considerations and possibilities. The engineering improvements optimized performance and mass, enabling MPG and also had an impact on the exterior's great design.



W 2017 AUDI Q7

SAFETY DANCE

FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THE Q7 GETS TANK-LIKE LEVELS OF PROTECTION

BY JAKE LINGEMAN

 THE ALL-NEW Audi Q7 can help you stay in your lane, keep you a safe distance from the car in front, save you from a cross-traffic crash, watch for pedestrians, turn the car and watch your mirrors for approaching traffic as you exit the vehicle.

The only thing it won't do for you is drive itself. However, after a full day in the car, caressing California's foggy, damp, twisty mountain roads, we almost wish it would back off just a little bit.

The second-generation, seven-passenger Q7, on sale now, attempts to take all the stress out of driving. It mostly does, but there are those times when a slightly riskier move might make more sense than what the camera, lasers, radar, sonar and LiDAR tell you ... but we'll get to that in a minute.

The 2017 Q7 comes with a new version of the company's 3.0-liter supercharged V6, making 333 hp at 5,500-6,000 rpm and 325 lb-ft in a broad 2,900-5,300 rpm swath.

An eight-speed Tiptronic transmission sends power through Audi's quattro all-wheel-drive system to whatever wheels it sees fit. We'll

eventually see a diesel in the lineup, too. The 4,938-pounder can cha-cha to 60 mph in an impressive 5.7 seconds.

Speaking of the weight figure, this Q7 is 474 pounds lighter than the previous one, thanks to the use of aluminum and other lightweight materials. The company notes that's the equivalent of taking a grand piano—or two big NFL running backs—out of the back seat. It also lowered the center of gravity about 1.5 inches—important because the Q7's computer senses that center and adjusts safety limits if, say, there's luggage on the roof.

Top speed is 130 mph, and mileage is rated at 19/25/21 (city/highway/combined). We returned about 18 mpg on our 250-mile trip, but we have notoriously heavy feet, and the roads weren't exactly flat, either.

The new Q gets Audi's single-frame grille and more-angular headlights, like the rest of the company's lineup. The sheetmetal is pulled tighter all the way around; it looks much less chubby and bubbly than before. The taillights are squared off, and the dual-exhaust pipes are integrated into a diffuser that looks like a skid-plate but is not one.

Audi cleaned up the dash with its quick-reacting virtual cockpit in upgraded models. The system puts the navigation in the gauge cluster so drivers only have to look down for a second to see where they are. It also uses Google Earth to help you see the sort of terrain you're approaching.

The central screen retracts when not in use, and the Bang & Olufsen sound system we tested belted out the loudest version of "Hello" our ears could stand.

You want numbers? How about 1,900 watts, 23 speakers and four—that's how many tears we shed during Adele's power ballad.

The Q7 offers either a steel- or air-suspension setup. The air ride comes packaged with four-wheel steering.

You know the deal on this: At slow speeds, the rear wheels slightly turn in the opposite direction of the front wheels to tighten the radius; at high speeds, they turn in the same direction, steadyng any quick lane changes.

We find the steel suspension to be plenty compliant on the curvy mountain roads and only a bit jouncy on the really rough stuff. The air suspension is adjustable—its



DRIVES

biggest advantage—ranging from soft in comfort mode to impressively stiff in dynamic.

The drive modes adjust everything on the air-suspension-equipped cars and everything but the suspension on the steel-equipped ones. The air cars also have off-road and lift modes; both give you extra travel on rutted terrain.

Audi is usually near the head of the pack in steering weight and feel, even on its big models. This Q7 continues the trend with something truly fun to drive—for an SUV. In both suspension setups, direction changes are quick without a lot of body roll, and it's easy to stick on the inside of a turn, as long as those safety features aren't cutting in.

The lane-keeping, pre-sense distance sensing and like systems mostly aren't intrusive. We test the traffic-assist system that accelerates, brakes and turns with traffic at speeds up to 37 mph, and it works well. You have to keep your hands on the wheel, or the system will chide you. But it keeps the Q7 in the lines while maintaining a safe distance. It would decrease stress in traffic.

Here's the rub: When on a curvy two-lane with only oncoming traffic, the natural tendency of the driver is to gently fade away from an oncoming car when it passes, but the lane-keeping feature—it turns on automatically—pushes the car back toward the middle of the lane, closer to the oncoming car.

It leads to a few hairier situations with bigger trucks and logging semis when we have to yank the car back over to the right line. The system only acts on the wheel with 3.7 lb-ft of torque, the most it can legally do to allow the driver to overpower it in case of emergency.

Thankfully, you can keep both hands on the wheel most of the time because the Q7 has all the controls at your fingertips. The virtual cockpit is controlled with a few buttons and a dial by your left thumb while radio and other important controls are on the right. On those dark, lonely roads, we are glad not to have to reach out or look down to touch a screen or turn a dial.

As for cargo and passenger room, the Q7 has space for seven, though the third row



would be a little tight for adults for long distances.

The middle row folds and tumbles out of the way with a 35/30/35 split. All five back seats can be configured any way you like, meaning if the kids want to go in the third row, you can fold all the second-row seats, leaving a ton of space in the middle. With them all stowed, you get 71.6 cubic feet of space.

The new Q7 is more fun to drive than many of its competitors, including the Acura MDX. The BMW X5 might be a little sprightly, but the third row there is optional.

Then there are the electronics. The level of tech in the Q7 is truly staggering—when it's not being annoying—and no doubt saves lives in the long run. The new hauler comes in at \$55,750, including \$950 in destination charges; the GLE starts at about \$52K, and the X5 costs about \$54K, so we have to say it's priced fairly.

And, of course, with the Audi Q7 *we can go where we want, to places they'll never find. And we can act like we come from out of this world, leave the real one far behind. And we can dance, and we can dance ...* ☺



2017 AUDI Q7

ON SALE: Now **BASE PRICE:** \$55,750

DRIVETRAIN: 3.0-liter, 333-hp, 325-lb-ft

supercharged V6; AWD, eight-speed

Tiptronic **CURB WEIGHT:** 4,938 lb 0-60

MILEAGE: 5.7 sec (est) **FUEL ECONOMY (EPA**

CITY/HWY/COMBINED: 19/25/21 mpg



2016 MINI CLUBMAN

PLUS-SIZED MINI

BIGGER MINI KEEPS ITS CUTE LITTLE PERSONALITY

BY WESLEY WREN

□ BY NAME, A MINI SHOULD be small. BMW has mostly kept to that since it took over the faltering marque in 2002. However, over the past few years, Minis have started approaching the limits of the sub-compact segment. The Countryman and the previous-generation Clubman have stayed sub-compact. With the latest Clubman, though, Mini has finally broken into the compact segment. With the car's increased size, Mini hopes to reach a wider audience and satisfy existing fans needing more space.

Some traditional Mini quirks are toned down in the new Clubman. The massive, center-mounted speedometer and frustrating console-mounted window switches have both moved to conventional places. But a Mini wouldn't be a Mini without a massive circle in the middle of the dash—this time it's just an LED ring surrounding the infotainment screen. In automatic-equipped models, you can change the ring to a variety of colors, but with the manual transmission, the ring is another tachometer.

Obviously, the major perk in sizing up is increased interior space, but how much bigger is the Clubman compared

to the rest of the Mini lineup? Well, cargo space with the seats up is only 17.5 cubic feet, but after dropping the 60/40 split seats, that number jumps to 47.9 cubic feet, 6 more feet compared to the Countryman. That's spacious, but sometimes more room doesn't equate to passenger space. This is one of those times. Simply put, if you're taller than 6 feet, you won't fit in back. Your legs will be fine thanks to the front seats' sculpted seat backs, but your head is either going to be cocked to the side or you'll have to slouch heavily to avoid the headliner.

The two rear barn doors keep the Clubman tradition alive but with a modern twist: So long as you have the key fob present near the rear of the car, you can open the Clubman's back doors with a kicking gesture. While not a ground-breaking feature, it's handy—especially



2016 MINI CLUBMAN

ON SALE: Now**BASE PRICE:** \$24,950**DRIVETRAIN:** 1.5-liter, 136-hp, 162-lb-ft turbocharged I3; FWD, six-speed manual**CURB WEIGHT:** 3,105 lb**0-60 MPH:** 8.9 sec**FUEL ECONOMY (EPA)****CITY/HWY/COMBINED:**
25/35/28 mpg (est)

if you have your arms full of groceries or TVs, or just can't be bothered to push a button.

The new Clubman still drives like a Mini should: agile and sporty. Models are split by engine choice. A turbocharged I3 fits under the regular Cooper's hood, but a turbo-four powers the S. The 1.5-liter three-cylinder produces 134 hp at 4,400 rpm, and the 162 lb-ft of torque at 1,250 rpm move the car along well. Power is linear despite the turbocharger, but the 0-60 time is a paltry 8.9 seconds. Both a six-speed manual and a six-speed automatic with optional paddle shifters are offered. We recommend the stick for the most fun; the automatic provides near-instant shifts.

The Cooper S' 2.0-liter turbo-four bumps horsepower to 189 at 5,000 rpm and torque up to 207 lb-ft. The S' automatic is an eight-speed, the manual a six-speed. Unlike the three-cylinder, the four produces enough punch to easily overpower the tires in first and second gear. Sixty mph arrives two seconds faster than in the base Cooper.

The Clubman feels like its smaller siblings despite weighing a relatively portly 3,105 pounds. The brakes are firm, and dive is minimal under heavy use. The same rings true for body roll—in corners this Mini stays pleasantly flat.

Overall, the Clubman could be a hard pill to swallow compared to other sporty compacts. The Ford Focus ST and Volks-

wagen GTI are the two heavy hitters in the small-but-fun hatchback world, and anyone buying in that segment probably looks at those two first.

The trouble is, a base Cooper rings in at \$24,950, and the S starts at \$28,500—right in line with those juggernauts, but we're not sure if the Cooper can compete.

What the Mini does offer over its competitors is individualization. Mini says there are over 10 million different ways you can order a Clubman—not the case for the ST or GTI, and a major consideration for Mini loyalists likely to make up the bulk of Clubman buyers.

Those looking for peak hot-hatch performance, though, might be better served elsewhere. ☺



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Civic Touring Sedan shown. ©2016 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

W 2017 MERCEDES-BENZ GLS

GREAT ASPIRATIONS

M-B'S GLS HAS A TOUCH OF S-CLASS
BUT IS STILL A TRIED-AND-TRUE GL

BY WESLEY WREN



ON SALE: Spring
BASE PRICE: \$70,000 (est)
DRIVETRAIN: 3.0-liter, 362-hp, 369-lb-ft twin-turbocharged V6; AWD, nine-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT: 5,511 lb
0-60 MPH: 6.5 sec (est)
FUEL ECONOMY (EPA)
CITY/HWY/COMBINED: 14/19/16 mpg (est)



MERCEDES-BENZ tacked an S to the end of its GL platform during a mid-cycle refresh for 2017, calling it the S-Class of SUVs. Already among our favorites in the luxe-SUV segment (or any other, for that matter), the big Benz impresses us as a seven-seater that can actually fit seven adults, tow a boat and not feel floaty or underpowered.

The exterior received a minor nip and tuck overall, but everything ahead of the A-pillar is new. Fresh sheetmetal and a new front fascia work together for a sportier look without moving too far away from the already successful GL appearance.

Like any other Benz, you can stuff the GLS with as many options as your wallet can stand. Adaptive cruise with steering control, blind-spot assist and lane-keeping assist can set you back handsomely, but standard features like crosswind assist and collision warning with autonomous braking help even the base GLS feel up to date.

The refresh didn't come with a diet. The GLS tips the scales at more than 2.5 tons, so you'd think it might just be a lumbering driver.

However, you can quickly put those thoughts to rest after sliding behind the wheel: The GLS is relatively agile and surprisingly flat while braking and cornering, thanks to the standard Airmatic suspension.

Like the outgoing GL, what's under a GLS' hood determines the model name. We get two gasoline options and a diesel. Powering the base gasoline-fed GLS450 (shown) is a twin-turbocharged 3.0-liter V6 knocking out 362 hp and 369 lb-ft.

Stepping up to the GLS550 nets buyers a twin-turbo V8 with 449 hp—the AMG GLS63 gets the same engine, but it's tuned to 577 hp.

Mercedes supplies its loyal diesel following with a 3.0-liter turbodiesel V6 under the GLS350's hood. The oil burner



delivers 255 hp and 455 lb-ft and won't actually roll coal—unlike certain other German diesel engines.

Most models have the new 9G-Tronic nine-speed automatic transmission; the GLS63 continues with the 7G-Tronic seven-speed auto.

Much like other Benzes, the GLS relies heavily on its Dynamic Select system to dictate performance. Sport, comfort, slippery, off-road, individual and the optional off-road-plus deliver different suspension and throttle settings for varying driving styles.

In sport mode, the GLS stiffens the steering, provides a more responsive throttle and drops the ride height. While this might be handy on dry pavement in warm conditions, it proves too much for the slick roads in the Austrian Alps. When we do find some traction, the GLS is peppy in sport mode. The shifts are on the softer side—to be expected with a luxury SUV.

Slippery mode basically ignores where we put the throttle, helping better control traction in Innsbruck's treacherous conditions. This feels alien initially but becomes familiar quickly.

Comfort mode is what you'd imagine—the air ride pumps up, and the road more or less disappears under the wheels. The steering becomes light, and we

doubt you'd feel much fatigue over a long trip. Off-road and off-road-plus modes raise the suspension to help clear some rougher roads.

The GLS actually feels a bit smaller than it really is from behind the wheel, unlike, say, a Cadillac Escalade, Infiniti QX80 or Lexus LX.

Similarly, the visibility problems normally plaguing large SUVs don't seem as onerous here as in the aforementioned haulers. All in all, the GLS has the driving feel of an S-Class, but as for those all-important upscale trimmings? The GLS is luxurious, yes, but still a long way from S-Class territory.

Competitive barges like the QX and Escalade deliver a more premium interior feel, but not the superb ride and handling and refined exterior design, plus the three engine choices, of the GLS.

Driving M-B's new SUV reminds us why we were so sad to see our long-term GL350 Bluetec leave the fleet; the name change has done nothing to dampen our enthusiasm for this big Mercedes.

Official pricing hasn't been released, but it's safe to assume it won't be too far from previous models' price tag: A base GL350 goes for around \$70K, with the GL450 about a grand more.

The 2017 SUVs are set to arrive in spring. ☺

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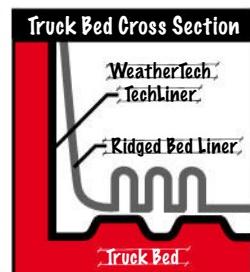


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COMPETITION

SAM BASS ■ INDCAR ■ ROBERT KUBICA ■ CHILI BOWL



NASCAR-licensed artist Sam Bass works at his studio on Concord, North Carolina. Bass began designing liveries for Jeff Gordon in 1992.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA MILLIGAN



RAINBOW MAKER

NASCAR ARTIST **SAM BASS** PROUD OF SMALL ROLE IN RACING LEGEND JEFF GORDON'S STORIED CAREER

BY MATT WEAVER



SAM BASS IS THE first to admit he played only a tiny part in just-retired NASCAR star Jeff Gordon's meteoric rise.

However, the 54-year-old artist was vital in shaping the public image and presentation of the four-time Sprint Cup champ during his transition to NASCAR in 1992, establishing a partnership that would last Gordon's whole career.

If not for Bass, Gordon would likely have never been associated with the Rainbow Warriors.

Many fans recognize Bass for his work as an artist and graphic designer, but fewer are aware he is also responsible for several iconic paint schemes in the sport's history, including those for Dale Earnhardt and Bobby Allison. He is NASCAR's first licensed artist.

A native Virginian, Bass attended numerous NASCAR events as a child and even painted his own matchbox cars to illustrate what he believed the Winston Cup entries of his formative years should have looked like.

Bass completed a five-year art program in four years at Virginia Commonwealth University and eventually made the trek to Charlotte Motor Speedway in 1984 to pursue his dream: working in NASCAR. After presenting track officials a portfolio of his work, he was allowed to design the cover for the '84 Coca-Cola 600 program and has been the artist behind the popular track guides ever since.

In May 1991, Ray Evernham stopped by Bass' studio across the street from Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina, to purchase a birthday gift for Gordon. The ensuing conversation gave birth to one of the most recognizable brands in sports.

Rather than charging Evernham for the art he had selected, Bass asked the promising young crew chief and engineer for a favor.

"I said I wanted him to do something for me instead," Bass recalled. "I told him that I knew he had been hired to be Jeff's crew chief and I knew they would have the DuPont paint company as a

sponsor, and I wanted the chance to design the car."

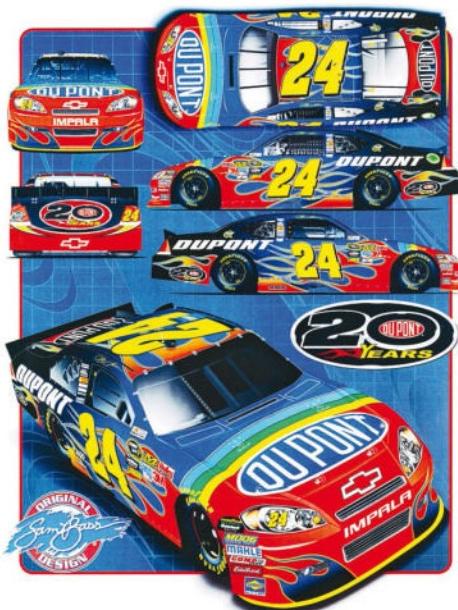
"He told me that he would see what he could do and call me once he found out. And sure enough, a few months later, he called and said, 'You've got your shot.'

Bass designed three different treatments for his vision of what the No. 24 Chevrolet (at the time, No. 46) should look like. Overall, DuPont Automotive Finishes gathered 43 samples from designers across the country, but it was a design Bass developed in the 11th hour that took the prize.

"I actually drew the rainbow car the morning they picked the treatments up," Bass said. "I had this idea driving to work, that DuPont Automotive Finishes offered a rainbow of colors. I was thinking about the oval on the hood and how the lines above it would naturally form a rainbow. I knew the moment I drew it, that this was the one. I just felt it."

Gordon went on to win three of his four championships and more than half his 93 career wins with that primary livery. The rest of his success mostly came in a car featuring a variety of flames first appearing during Gordon's 2001 championship run.

Bass said the transition from rainbows



to flames was under a larger concept for Gordon titled "Forces of Nature," and he wanted to adorn the now-legendary No. 24 with lightning bolts.

In 2008, DuPont was ready to move away from the blue base with red flames. Bass offered the paint company roughly 10 treatments of a Gordon car with lightning bolts instead of flames or rainbows.

Images of those cars have never been released until now, and they offer a look at what Gordon might have driven during the 2009 season.

Ultimately, Gordon and DuPont opted to maintain the flames but change to a black base, paying homage to a design the four-time champion featured on an early Quarter Midget car.

"I knew how important that was to him, so we stayed with that direction and just changed the style of the flames and made the car a whole lot more menacing," Bass said. "It was almost like when Earnhardt went from the yellow car to the Goodwrench car. He was tough as all get-out before, but he was absolutely intimidating in the black car."

Gordon would drive a Chevrolet adorned with flames until he retired, using a positive/negative design christened "Firestorm." Even with so many fantastic designs not making the track, Bass said he's proud of his work for Gordon, adding he was nervous each time he was asked to

Many of Bass' designs for Jeff Gordon liveries never made it to the track. Note the lightning bolts on the Nicorette Chevy Impala SS.

go in a new direction.

"Because my designs had been so positively received, I always put a lot of pressure on myself to not be the guy that screwed up

Jeff Gordon's paint

scheme," Bass said. "I felt really good over those 23 years that I never screwed one up so, phew, I got to take a deep breath every time fans took to one of my designs."

Fans were somewhat disappointed in 2015 as Gordon only drove a retro rainbow car once, during the Bristol Night Race. The rest of the season, he mostly used Drive to End Hunger and Axalta paint schemes from the previous season.

Ultimately, Axalta chose consistency over novelty.

"There were a couple designs that were more of my favorite than what we ended up going with, but the direction I wanted us to go was always there," Bass said. "It might have been a color switch or a swap here and there, but I feel really good about what we did over two decades."

"I feel very fortunate that when you do work for a paint company, it's a dream for an artist. If they don't have a color that I had in mind, they could always make it, and that was just the coolest thing to me." ■



To see more of Bass' work and more versions of Jeff Gordon's car designs that never made it to the racetrack, visit bit.ly/aw-sambass

NASCAR GREAT MARVIN PANCH DIES AT 89



GETTY IMAGES

■ IT'S PUZZLING THAT THE LATE Marvin Panch hasn't been among the 55 nominees over the seven years of NASCAR's Hall of Fame.

"He's very deserving, so he'll eventually be considered," says Ned Jarrett, a two-time Cup champion and 2011 inductee. "He was very good but maybe a little underappreciated."

Panch, 89, died of natural causes on New Year's Eve in Port Orange, Florida. A native of Wisconsin, he moved to California at an early age, then to Florida in the early 1950s at the urging of NASCAR founder Bill France Sr. Panch never ran a full season—indeed, only once between 1951 and 1966 did he approach half the schedule—but was top 10 in points five times, including second place behind Buck Baker in 1957.

"Marvin concentrated more on racing than on being a star," says Eddie Wood of Wood Brothers Racing, where Panch enjoyed great success. "He wasn't a big self-promoter, which is why some people never realized how good he was. He belongs in the Hall of Fame."

In 216 career starts for a dozen owners, Panch won 17 races, including a Daytona 500, Coca-Cola 600 and twice at Atlanta. With the Wood brothers, he had eight victories in just 81 starts, with 44 top-five finishes, an astonishing 35 of them in the top three. He was named one of NASCAR's 50 greatest drivers and is in several racing halls of fame.

Almost certainly, another awaits.

—AL PEARCE

How a Chicago Doctor Shook Up the Hearing Aid Industry with his Newest Invention

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified Ear, Nose, and Throat physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical-grade, ALL-DIGITAL, affordable hearing aid.

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This sleek, fully programmed, light-weight, hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), the cost of a digital medical-grade hearing aid remains out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn’t afford the expense for these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance plans.



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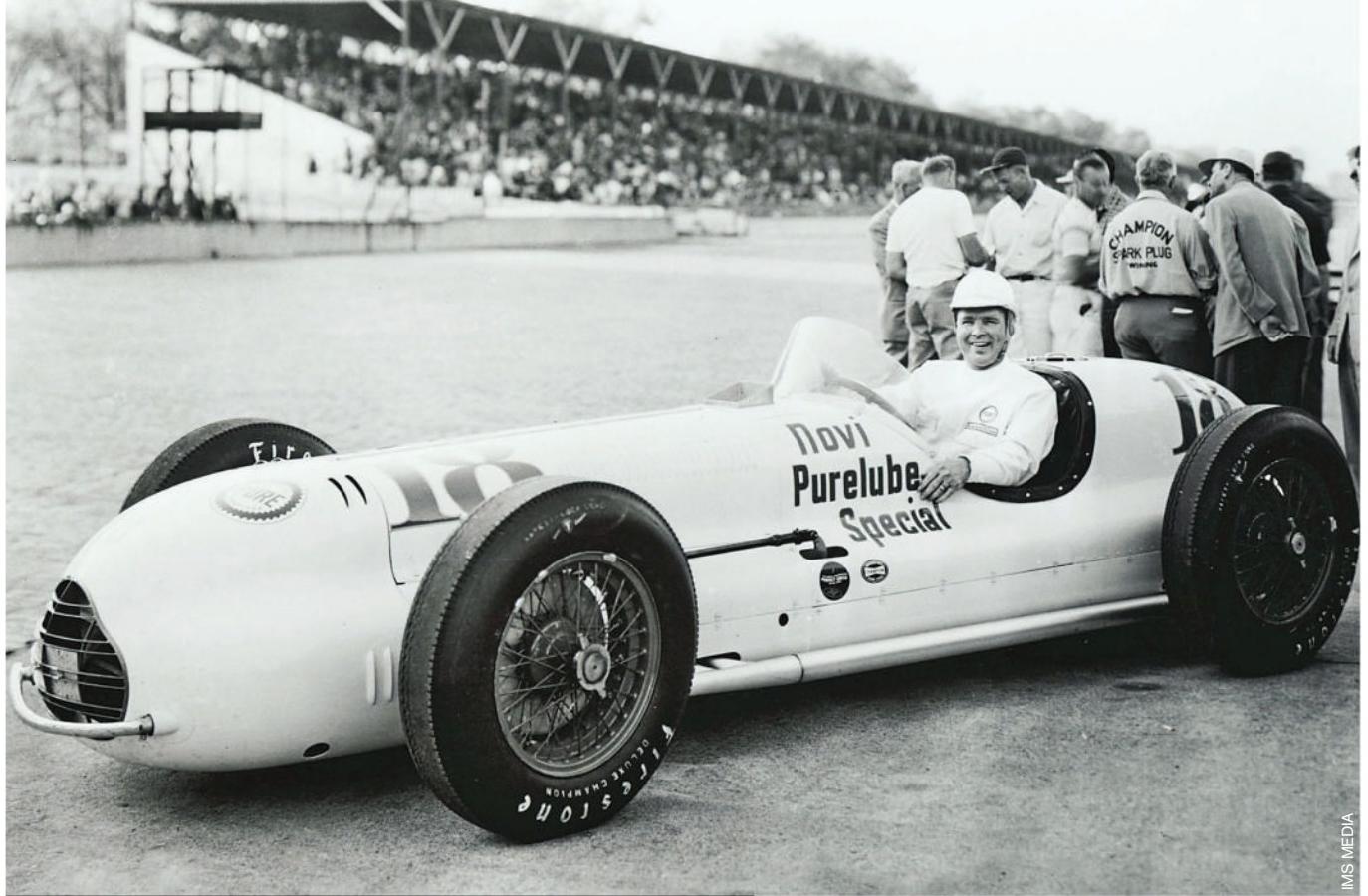
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■ “THOSE NOVI engines,” said Andy Granatelli, frowning. “They would not only pass you, they’d punish you. Loud coming around you, then they’d spit smoke and carbon in your face until you backed off. Pretty smart, but pretty infuriating if you weren’t driving one.”

Granatelli’s brief driving career ended in 1948 and he went on, of course, to become one of the highest-profile car owners. He won the

Indy 500 with Mario Andretti in 1969, with everyone covered in logos from STP, the company that made Granatelli rich.

Granatelli got a taste of driving and crashing and more than a taste of the legendary Novi engines.

One of dozens of companies trying to penetrate the tough field that was the Indianapolis 500 in the early ’40s, the Novi was born in Novi, Michigan, northwest of Detroit. Brothers Bud and Ed Winfield, who built carburetors,

wanted to build an Indy car using the era specifications allowing for 3.0-liter supercharged engines or 4.5-liter naturally aspirated engines. They found a moneymen in Lewis Welch of Novi, who built parts for Ford and other manufacturers. Welch wanted the engine named after his hometown.

Studebaker.info.org says it was a 90-degree, 16-valve V8 with gear-driven double overhead camshafts and hemispherical combustion chambers. A horizontal shaft from the rear of the engine ran the big front-mounted, intercooled centrifugal supercharger. It used three Winfield carburetors, and at 8,000 rpm, the blower turned 42,000 rpm, producing up to 30 psi of boost.

The Novi was rated at 450 hp—a typical Offenhauser had 300. “The front-drive Novi was always heavy, thirsty and hard on tires, and it qualified in 28th place at 120 mph in 1941. Ralph Hepburn finished the race in a trouble-free fourth position,” notes the website.

The engine returned after World

Duke Nalon in a Novi at the Speedway in 1951. Nalon put a Novi on the pole at Indianapolis in both 1949 and 1951. His best finish at the Brickyard was third in 1948.

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In frontier times, the Apache people of the Southwest were famed and feared for their incredible skill with a bow and arrow. An Apache's aim was always on point. This impressive accuracy was earned through dedicated practice, but the Apache also believe that wearing their iconic blue-green stones steadied the hand, granted a little extra luck and imbued the wearer with added confidence when pulling back the bow and releasing an arrow.



The Stauer *Blue Arrow Necklace* is equally on point and designed to deliver added confidence in any setting. This necklace offers an incredible 350 carats of that same turquoise look the Apache put their faith in. The undeniable glamour of this statement necklace comes from its rugged natural beauty, making it equally ideal for a formal affair where you want to stand out or a laid back gathering where you want to unwind.

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— Kay, Ardmore, OK

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War II, now a 500-hp V8 in a Kurtis Kraft front-wheel-drive car, setting the track record at the Indianapolis 500 in 1946.

The engine wail was due to the gear-driven supercharger, and its quad-camshaft design gave it an exhaust note unlike anything else on the track. Its power also overmatched the era's cars and tires—the deaths of Hepburn in 1948 and Chet Miller in 1953 in Indy 500 practices came in Novi-powered cars.

Stunningly, the Novi stuck around for 25 years, last run by the Studebaker-connected Granatelli himself, who purchased the rights to the Novi. Granatelli's team raced it from 1961 to 1965, the last in a four-wheel-drive car with 800 hp. Drivers included legends like Jim Hurtubise, Art Malone and Bobby Unser. The Novi engine last appeared at Indy in 1966.

Duke Nalon finished third in a Novi in 1948, and that was as good as it got. Unfortunately, the Novi never won at Indy. Nor did a lot of the engines racing at Indianapolis.

It wasn't always like it is now, with two engine manufacturers. At least it's better than the Indy Racing League's early years, when sometimes a few Infinitis were sprinkled throughout a nearly full field of Oldsmobiles.

Prior to that, it was difficult for the average fan to even figure out who built what, in the era when Cosworth and Ilmor (both in the



IMS MEDIA (2)

U.K.) built Ford and Chevrolet engines respectively. So is that really a Ford vs. Chevy battle?

Of course, in the early years, everyone was chasing the four-cylinder Offenhauser—it had already won by 1935. Fred Offenhauser and Leo Goossen had built the definitive Indy engine with a startling 27 wins—in both naturally aspirated and supercharged configurations—18 straight from '47 to '64.

Offenhauser and his employee, the legendary Harry Miller, developed the Offy in 1930 as a boat engine. Miller began building the engine himself but went bankrupt in 1933, and Offenhauser bought the rights to the engine. Goossen then helped turn that engine into a genuine Indy contender.

It pumped out a reliable 420 hp naturally aspirated, but turbocharged, it could top 1,000. The Offy last won an IndyCar race in Trenton, New Jersey, with Gordon

Johncock, and the last time the engine ran at Indy was in 1982, when it failed to qualify—a 52-year run.

Of course, what happens at Indy now—and will happen in May with the 100th running—is a far cry from what happened in 1911, when 40 cars started the race. The winning engine was a Marmon in Ray Harroun's Marmon Wasp, followed by a Lozier, a Fiat and a Mercedes. And a Simplex. Then a National, Amplex, Knox, Jackson, Wisconsin, Mercer, Firestone-Columbus, Interstate, Velie, Benz, Pope-Hartford, Cutting, McFarland, Cole, Case, Westcott, Apperson, Alco and Buick. In last, the answer to the ultimate auto trivia question: Arthur Grenier in an Amplex-powered Simplex. (Or was it a Simplex-powered Amplex? No, we were right the first time.)

Twenty-four engines in 40 cars? Will we ever see that again?

We can hope, but no.

—STEVEN COLE SMITH

Above: Bobby Unser drove the No. 9 STP Gas Treatment, Novi-powered Ferguson to a 19th-place finish in the 1965 Indy 500.

Below: A field of 40 cars, representing 24 different engine manufacturers, lines up for the starting of the 1911 Indy 500.



LET'S GO.



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'GLAD TO BE IN MY SHOES'

THREE-TIME WINNER HÉLIO CASTRONEVES HAS SIGHTS SET ON 100TH INDY 500

BY MIKE LARSON

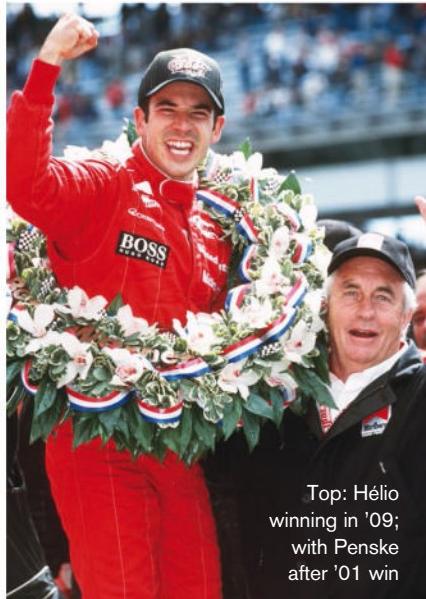
HÉLIO CASTRONEVES HAS never cared much for astronomy.

In other words, the Team Penske IndyCar driver isn't one to worry about the stars aligning.

Regardless, the Brazilian is still well aware of what the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500 (scheduled to take place on May 29) could mean for him.

A win at Indy would give Castroneves his fourth Indy 500 championship—tying him with A.J. Foyt, Al Unser Sr. and Rick Mears for the most all-time and making him the first non-American-born driver to win four times. For Roger Penske, it would mean a record 17th Indy 500 win as an owner.

"I can't say I haven't thought about that," Castroneves said about the importance of the Indy 500. "But you can't get



Top: Hélio winning in '09; with Penske after '01 win
LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC (2)

caught up too much (in that). Listen, we can only promise that, as a team—and I can only promise, as a driver—to do everything we can. If the stars were to align, it would be a perfect storm. But we don't need the stars to align because we know the preparation we put into these cars."

Castroneves won back-to-back Indy 500s in 2001 and 2002, and again in 2009. All three of his wins have come as a member of Team Penske. Currently, he's the only driver on the grid who has a chance

to win a fourth Indy 500. Dario Franchitti has three wins, but he retired from racing in 2013. Castroneves' Team Penske teammate and 2015 Indy 500 winner Juan Pablo Montoya, with two wins, is the only other active driver with more than one victory.

"I have one of the best teams; for me, the best team. And they give me a great chance to win this race. The preparation is top-notch. When you have that, you just need to hit the ball. That's why every time I go to Indy, I don't need the stars to align."

Make no mistake, though—the driver still thinks the chance to chug that famed milk in May is pretty special.

"There's just so much history to this race," he said. "It's not even that it's the 100th running—winning it any time is amazing. The history is incredible, and the fans enjoy it, and I enjoy it."

"I'm glad to be in my shoes because I've been doing this for so long," Castroneves said in January at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. "A lot of people like the idea of someone getting a chance to win for a fourth time. I feel like (winning the) 100th would just be a storybook end. Like the end of a movie. But we just cannot read a script, we have to make it happen. I'm honored to be driving for a team that has the (all-time Indy 500 wins) record, and I want to go tie the (individual Indy 500 all-time wins) record, too." ☀

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Ridgeline RTL-E shown. ©2016 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

CHALLENGE, ACCEPTED

WITH AN F1 CAREER CUT SHORT, ROBERT KUBICA FOUND A HOME IN THE WRC

BY ANTHONY PEACOCK

KFORMER FORMULA ONE driver Robert Kubica is a straight-talking guy who has a sense of humor that belies the hard knocks he has taken, both mentally and physically.

Following one of the rocky stages of a World Rally Championship event in Italy in 2015, a journalist asked how Kubica's right arm, partially severed during a terrifying crash at a club-level rally in February 2011, had stood up to the punishing terrain.

"Well, it's still here, isn't it?" said Kubica.

So is Kubica, who continues to climb the ranks in top-level rallying.

The 2015 WRC began with Monte Carlo last January, where Kubica charged into a spectacular lead too good to last. The campaign ended with a points finish in November at Rally Great Britain—the event he always said was the most difficult on the circuit—on his way to a career-best 12th-place season finish in the top division of WRC competition.

Running outside the top 10, however, was not Kubica's plan when he made the move to rallying. He won the WRC2 championship in 2013. The WRC's top classification has been a more difficult



mountain to conquer.

"The experience I had in Britain from last year helped a lot," he said. "Some things that were scaring me before feel more normal now."

One thing that never felt normal was Kubica trying to run his own team while at the same time still learning the ropes during his second season in top-flight rallying. It's an exercise he is unlikely to repeat in 2016 after a couple of organizational crises forced him to miss two events in 2015.

"I had to run the team myself, learn the events and prepare good pace notes, which is not easy," Kubica, 31, said. "It's hard to adjust to being in this position."

Kubica is no stranger to taking unconventional paths in his racing career. The biggest career move was not an intended one—it was forced upon him after his rallying injuries derailed a promising F1 career (76 starts from 2006-2010 and a 2008 Canadian Grand

FROM F1 TO RALLY

■ OTHERS WHO TOOK TO RALLYING:

Robert Kubica is far from the first former Formula One racer to give rallying a shot. Several drivers, including past F1 champions Mika Häkkinen, Jim Clark and Kimi Räikkönen have driven in top-level rally competition to give big-time star power to that racing discipline.



MIKA SALO

Following an F1 career spanning 1994-2002, Salo was a regular in the Arctic Lapland Rally and even tackled Norway's world championship event in 2006.



MIKA HÄKKINEN

McLaren's two-time F1 champion (1998, '99) made occasional appearances in the Arctic Lapland Rally late in his racing career.



ALEX CAFFI

With a career in Formula One (1988-91) behind him, Caffi tackled the Monte Carlo Rally in 2011 with a Škoda Fabia Super 2000.



Prix win for the BMW Sauber team).

Kubica needed life-saving surgery after a crash barrier plunged through the middle of his Škoda Fabia Super 2000 during Italy's Rally Ronde di Andora in February 2011, causing sickening injuries to the right side of his body and nearly the loss of an arm.

The rally crash came just four days after Kubica had finished quickest in an F1 test session in Valencia, Spain.

"It was the biggest challenge of my life," Kubica said of the traumatic period following the accident and his ongoing recovery. "I think 80 percent is fixed though."

Kubica claimed nine stage wins in 2015, making him comfortably the fastest privateer in the WRC championship, with 14 career stage wins in total. He also led a gravel rally for the first time, in Spain.

Kubica's WRC crashes have outnumbered his wins. He says he'd like the progression to happen faster, just as it did in Formula One (where he was touted as a future Ferrari driver) but acknowledges

that on a new circuit there are maybe 20 corners to learn, as opposed to thousands on a rally, with a huge variety of surfaces and weather.

Ironically, it was the desire to return to Formula One after his accident that originally prompted a full-time switch to rallying in 2013 rather than the easier DTM (German) touring car series, where he had an option to drive for Mercedes.

"Choosing rally might look a bit strange, but I was attracted to the big challenge in front of me," Kubica said. "Definitely the DTM might have been easier because it is more natural to me, but my first priority was to recover as quickly as possible, and rallying gave me that possibility because I am in the car for much longer, always driving."

Kubica's stay in the WRC, however, may be short-lived, as funding for 2016 is not guaranteed beyond Monte Carlo.

Robert Kubica, shown above in 2015 action, came to the WRC in 2012 with the idea that it would allow him to stay sharp for a possible return to Formula One.

"The last rally (in 2015), in Britain, was quite a good surprise for me: how I improved my driving in these conditions," he said. "But I need to keep improving. Doing one more season, or even a few events, in the way I'm doing it now doesn't make sense."

His willingness to talk so openly about his own shortfalls—in contrast to former F1 rival Kimi Räikkönen, who spent two seasons in the WRC barely speaking at all—is because he's a rally fan first, competitor second. He's often spotted holding court in service parks and time controls flanked by several admiring rivals, bringing real star quality to the WRC.

"This would actually be the worst time to stop," he said. "I feel more like a rally driver than ever. Because I've been through things more than once on the rallies now, you are more comfortable and able to drive better and quicker." ☀



DEREK WARWICK

Warwick, who made 147 starts in F1 from 1981-93, took part in the RAC Rally in England at the wheel of a Subaru Legacy in 1990 while an active Lotus F1 driver.



MARTIN BRUNEL

The Englishman made 158 F1 starts from 1984-96 before competing in Britain's round of the WRC in 1996 and 1999.



JIM CLARK

Clark, Formula One champ in 1963 and 1965, is the only reigning F1 champion to have rallied, having contested the 1966 RAC Rally in a Lotus Cortina.



KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN

Ferrari F1 driver Räikkönen completed two full seasons (2010-11) in the WRC with a best result of fifth overall in the 2010 Rally of Turkey.



STÉPHANE SARRAZIN

The Frenchman competed in one F1 Grand Prix: Brazil 1999. The Le Mans specialist has made 15 WRC starts (52 rally starts total) since 2004.



RUPERT BERRINGTON

RICO'S REPEAT

NASCAR UP-AND-COMER ABREU IS SECOND BACK-TO-BACK CHILI BOWL WINNER IN 30 YEARS

BY STEVEN COLE SMITH

■ LAST YEAR, RICO Abreu took a huge step toward a major career as a professional race-car driver with a win at the Chili Bowl Nationals, the indoor Midget-car race that takes a week of qualifying races to carve a field of 344 cars down to 24 entries for the A Feature.

This year, Abreu notched his second-straight win, passing leader Bryan Clauson late in the race. Abreu announced a full-time ride in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series a day before he became the second driver (Kevin Swindell is the other) in the Chili Bowl's 30-year history to take back-to-back wins.

Clauson dominated the race early and stretched out an unheard-of full-straightaway lead early before a series of crashes and flips brought out the caution flag. And on each restart, Clauson's once-big lead further dissipated.

The race was stopped with 14 laps to go when a fan fell out of the stands onto a concrete apron about 15 feet below, breaking his leg.

Following a restart with 10 laps left, Abreu took his Keith Kunz-owned No. 97 Toyota inside Clauson's car, and Abreu wasn't

again seriously challenged.

"This is my favorite race of the year," said Abreu, who turned 24 on Jan. 30. "(It's) the one I most look forward to. The race just keeps growing and growing—it might be just another race on my schedule, but it's the biggest."

Clauson was second; Zach Daum third; Jerry Coons fourth; and NASCAR star and Abreu's mentor, Kyle Larson, fifth.

One of the more bizarre stories of the week involved former Chili Bowl winner Tony Stewart, who hasn't raced at the Tulsa, Oklahoma, track since he was injured in a sprint-car crash a couple years ago. He was at the event, though, helping with race control and track preparation.

On the night before the championship race, Stewart confronted a fan in the stands who had apparently been harassing him during the week, calling the NASCAR star names in reference to the 2014 tragedy where Stewart hit a fellow sprint-car driver, Kevin Ward Jr.

Stewart went into the stands, where he and the race fan spoke for a moment. The fan turned out to be a Tulsa area sheriff's deputy. Security removed the deputy; Tulsa police are investigating the incident. ☀

RACING ON TV

SATURDAY, JAN. 30

- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Rolex 24 at Daytona, Daytona Beach, Florida; 2 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Rolex 24 at Daytona, Daytona Beach, FL; 4 p.m., Fox Sports 2 (L)

SUNDAY, JAN. 31

- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Rolex 24 at Daytona, Daytona Beach, FL; 7 a.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Rolex 24 at Daytona, Daytona Beach, FL; 8 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., Fox Sports 2 (L)
- IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship Rolex 24 at Daytona, Daytona Beach, FL; 1 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

SUNDAY, FEB. 7

- Formula E, Buenos Aires, Argentina; 1 a.m., Fox Sports 2 (T)

FRIDAY, FEB. 12

- NASCAR Sprint Unlimited practice, Daytona Beach, FL; 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck qualifying, Daytona Beach, FL; 4:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Nextra Energy Resources 250, Daytona Beach, FL; 7:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

SATURDAY, FEB. 13

- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Daytona Beach, FL; 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- ARCA Racing Series Lucas Oil 200, Daytona Beach, FL; 4 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Unlimited, Daytona Beach, FL; 8:15 p.m., Fox (L)

SUNDAY, FEB. 14

- NASCAR Sprint Cup Daytona 500 qualifying, Daytona Beach, FL; 1:15 p.m., Fox (L)

- NHRA Circle K Winternationals, Pomona, California; 5 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 17

- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Daytona Beach, FL; 5 p.m. and 6:10 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

THURSDAY, FEB. 18

- NASCAR Sprint Cup Duel at Daytona 1 qualifying race, Daytona Beach, FL; 7 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup Duel at Daytona 2 500 qualifying race, Daytona Beach, FL; 9 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

FRIDAY, FEB. 19

- NASCAR Xfinity practice, Daytona Beach, FL; 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Daytona Beach, FL; noon and 2 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck qualifying, Daytona Beach, FL; 4:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Nextra Energy Resources 250, Daytona Beach, FL; 7:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

SATURDAY, FEB. 20

- NASCAR Xfinity qualifying, Daytona Beach, FL; 10 a.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity Series Powershares QQQ 300, Daytona Beach, FL; 3:30 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)

SUNDAY, FEB. 21

- NASCAR Sprint Cup Daytona 500, Daytona Beach, FL; 1 p.m., Fox (L)

(L) = live, (T) = tape delay

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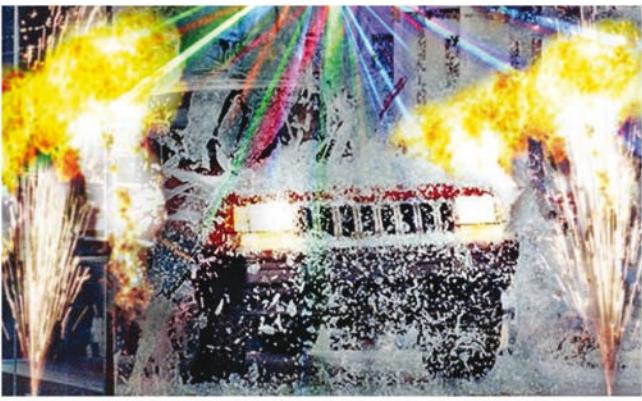
PUNCHED-UP NAIAS PR CLASSICS

■ There was plenty of fresh sheetmetal to ogle at this year's NAIAS (page 4), but the proceedings at Cobo Hall lacked the sizzle of the pre-recession years. Ford parading smarmy manlet Ryan Seacrest out onto its stand to read from a teleprompter was about as wild as it got. The Detroit show used to be the home of grand, stupid, expensive, negligent-yet-entertaining productions! But it's not enough to merely repeat the past,

so we're punching the upgrade button on some NAIAS classics.

■ Mercedes-Benz's towering wall of ice, above, impregnated with car badges, was novel, but the '07 display lacked the stupefying scale this jaded, post-“Game of Thrones” world demands. We want a wall of ice ... impregnated with actual cars. Go big or go home. Bonus: You can sell the ice-making equipment to Cadillac when they finally decide to copy you.

■ Jeep, below left, drove a Grand Cherokee through a glass wall in '92! We're keeping the basic formula the same but upgrading things with pyrotechnics and a death-metal Arthur Brown cover band. “I am the god of hellfire and I bring you ... THE 2018 GRAND CHEROKEE HELLCAT!” ■ Ram's steer stunt drove cattle (and pickups) to auto show glory in '08, but repurposing those cattle into urban-farmed, hyper-local, FCA-branded USDA Prime steaks is more 2016.



MARINDETROIT VIA FLICKR; GETTY IMAGES



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THE 2016

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RDX with Advance Package shown. *20 city/29 highway/23 combined mpg rating for RDX FWD model. Based on 2016 EPA mileage ratings. Use for comparison purposes only. Your actual mileage will vary depending on how you drive and maintain your vehicle. ©2015 Acura. Acura, RDX, and the stylized "A" logo are registered trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

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2016 Jaguar XF S vehicle shown. *Class is cars sold by luxury automobile brands and claim is based on total package of warranty, maintenance and other coverage programs. For complete details regarding Jaguar EliteCare coverage, please visit JAGUARUSA.COM, call 1.800.4.JAGUAR or visit your local Jaguar Retailer. © 2015 JAGUAR LAND ROVER NORTH AMERICA, LLC